

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS
President Joe Bertolino
September 18, 2018

Hello everyone and welcome again to the fall semester and the new academic year!

Before I commence my remarks I want to thank everyone involved in what has been a fabulous start to the year.

Our move-in days, the Week of Welcome, New Faculty Orientation...everywhere I went there was a flurry of positive activity that shed a good light on our campus and our community.

The only potential mishap was when Chief Dooley lent me his cap and let me direct traffic for a while, but thankfully there were no accidents.

Before I forget, we had a great turnout for our first-ever Week of Welcome social media photo contest. Congratulations to Dr. Stephen Axon in geography, Dr. Joe Milone in recreation & leisure studies, Dr. Candy Hwang in chemistry, the student organization Theta Lau, and student Paige Tetro. We have prizes for you in the back of the room. Make sure to pick them up before you leave!

I also want to welcome all of our new arrivals to campus - if you joined us this summer or at the start of the fall, please stand and be recognized - welcome to Southern!

We have a lot to look forward to this year - and one big reason is because it's our 125th anniversary!

We've come a long way since our founding in 1893, growing from a small two-year teacher training school into the comprehensive public university that we are today.

As you may know, the exact date of our anniversary was last Tuesday, September 11, but due to the commemoration of 9/11 we held off the start of our celebrations a little.

The theme of our anniversary celebration is: "Building Communities, Empowering Lives," and to me that says so much about what has distinguished Southern as an institution during the last 125 years.

Folks, ours is a worthy mission, and it is certainly something to celebrate. With that in mind, I invite all of you to join me on at our campus wide anniversary kick-off celebration next Monday, September 24, at noon in the academic quad.

There'll also be an alumni Grand Reunion event during Homecoming weekend in October, an anniversary Gala in the spring, and a host of related events during the next nine months, as we honor the past and showcase the Southern of today.

I hope you'll take the opportunity to participate in as many activities as possible, show your Southern pride while wearing your 125th anniversary lapel pin and share our wonderful story with the wider community.

To put you in the spirit, I want to share with you the first in a series of Living History videos, featuring an alumnus from every decade back to the 1930s....

Wasn't she great! The fact that she is so poised and alert at 104 is one thing, but her pride in her roots and the education she received here should be an inspiration to us all.

I have to tell you that everywhere I go out in the community, the word on the street about Southern and what we are accomplishing is overwhelmingly positive.

I know we've struggled with our reputation at times in the past, but that is clearly turning, and I'm confident that this will assist us as we address our enrollment challenges and seek to bring in more private support to the university.

So I want to thank each and every one of you for what you have done - and what you will do - to move Southern forward and help us achieve our goals.

As I begin my third year as president, I continue to be impressed by the talents and dedication of this community, so I hope you're all planning to stay right here after this speech for our first faculty and staff appreciation event, where I'll thank as many of you as I can, in person.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next nine months will be a time of celebration, and they also promise to be a time of progress for our institution. Here are some recent or forthcoming initiatives to look forward to:

- In June, we broke ground for the Obama Magnet University School on Farnham Avenue. This is a signature academic partnership between Southern, the New Haven public school system and the community with multiple opportunities to investigate best practices, conduct research, prepare teachers and

leaders, and promote educational innovation and learning in the early grades. The school is slated to open by fall, 2019

- Other new buildings are on the way. In the heart of campus, we're now in the design phase for a new home for the School of Health and Human Services, on the Fitch Street frontage adjacent to Pelz Gym. Design is also set to begin for a new home for the School of Business, on Wintergreen Avenue.
- GEARUP New Haven, headed at Southern by Joy Fopiano, has been a critical example of how higher education can partner with local schools to ensure student achievement onto a pathway of lifelong learning. After seven years, our GEARUP students have now graduated and hundreds are attending college and universities (more than 150 are at Southern). Some took up to 15 credits of college courses here already.
- With our trans-Atlantic partner, Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), Southern has formed a consortium with institutions in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Shanghai, China to promote international student exchange, particularly at the graduate level. We have a pending joint graduate program in coastal resilience with LJMU, the first of a portfolio of joint degrees that will make our collaboration unique in American higher education.
- We've just launched our third doctoral program - a Professional Doctorate in Social Work - that is the first of its kind in New England. Due to the specialization now required for advanced employment and leadership roles in health and related fields, the social work program is expected to be a draw both locally and overseas.

- We also have a new portfolio of accelerated bachelor's and master's degrees that will allow students to complete both in five years. These programs - in athletic training, chemistry, cybersecurity and therapeutic recreation - offer a time-saving, cost-effective path to a graduate degree.
- In another new academic initiative, we've started a pilot program offering classes at Gateway and Housatonic Community Colleges. These are free as long as students commit to Southern after completing their associate degree. In essence, we're looking to support higher levels of degree attainment by increasing support for transfer students, removing the barriers of location, and reducing the financial impact as they pursue their studies. It's another way to put our mission of access and social justice into practice.
- Our sustainability efforts have earned national attention and if you walk down Farnham to Lot 9 you'll see the first of more than 3,000 solar panels being installed on the west side of campus. With an annual generation capacity of more than a million kilowatts, this renewable energy project will save us significant dollars on electricity purchases.
- And finally, thanks to a collaborative effort between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, our new Academic Advising program has launched, with Dr. Helen Marx as Faculty Director of Undergraduate Advising. This will serve as a crucial component of our efforts to engage students academically and support them as they progress to a degree. Many thanks to the faculty in the School of Business and STEM departments for being a part of our first phase of implementation.

- The new Advising Model has led to two important additional developments. We have now established a standalone focus on the career development and preparation of our students. This summer we welcomed Kelvin Rutledge as the Director of our Office of Career and Professional Development, which will serve as our centralized conduit for career education, internships and experiential learning. The office joins the Academic Success Center, New Student and Sophomore Programs, and First-Year Experience in the Southern Success Center on the 3rd floor of Buley!

HIGHLIGHTS

That's a snapshot of the latest developments, and here are some more highlights from across the divisions:

- We will have a major grant announcement in the next several weeks that will be very exciting. The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research has seen an exciting amount of activity in the past year, with a 21% increase in proposal submissions and a doubling of its funding yield, from 21% to 44%. The results are showing, with a number of recent major grants, including: \$340,000 from the National Institutes of Health to Dr. Aukje Lamonica in public health for her analysis of the growing epidemic of opioid addiction. Psychology colleagues Dr. Julia Irwin, and Dr. Kelly Stiver were also awarded more than \$300,000 each for their respective studies.
- I'm also very pleased to announce that we have a new appointment to the Goodwin Endowed Chair in Special Education: Dr. Fred Volkmar, a specialist in autism and developmental disorders. Dr. Volkmar has been a member of the Yale faculty since 1982 and he

will be spending much of his time here supporting and expanding the work of our Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

- Thanks to the support of the Stutzman Family Foundation, our University Choir led by Therese Gemme had another memorable overseas tour, this time to Portugal, where the choir performed in Lisbon, Porto, and the Albufeira.
- Speaking of support, our development efforts received a boost this summer with the arrival of Michael Kingan as our new Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Michael brings a great deal of experience and expertise to this role and has already begun some positive restructuring in the advancement area.

We have a solid foundation to build on: our endowment had reached almost \$30 million as of June 30; and we were able to award \$646,000 in scholarship support in fiscal year '18. You have been helping the cause: our 2018 Giving Day raised almost \$55,000 - almost \$20,000 more than the previous year. And last year, faculty and staff alone raised \$142,618 for Southern and its students. Given the positive community vibes about Southern that I mentioned earlier, I believe there are new sources of private and corporate funding that we can engage.

- Switching gears - a lot has been going on in the world of Information Technology. As part of a joint effort between IT and our Communications & Marketing team, the University website is in the process of being redesigned and replaced. The new website will be released this fall and will be a vast improvement over our old site with a modern and engaging interface.
- This past December, we were first among our peers to move the Banner ERP system to the cloud. We have begun upgrading to the

latest version which will improve the user experience and provide a more modern software environment.

- An additional 10 learning spaces on campus have been upgraded with new technology as part of the ongoing effort to provide a modern and compelling teaching/learning environment. More than 70 academic spaces have been enhanced with new technology over the past few years.
- The replacement of the entire wireless infrastructure has been completed. Expansion of wireless coverage to open areas such as the academic quad and athletic fields is now underway.
- Our School of Business' partnership with Watson Analytics continues to blossom. Forty-two interns were trained and placed in organizations to provide data analysis and reports to employers and another 13 will be placed next spring. The goal is to expand this program and to partner with IBM's University Relations in a university Center for Data Analytics.
- Our business school is now the only one in the state to offer Treasury Management – a non-credit program developed to deliver the training for students and finance professionals to sit for the exam to qualify as a Certified Treasury Professional.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has recognized Southern for our commitment to sustainable food management practices. 45 tons of food scraps from Conn Hall was converted into renewable energy and landscape projects through a partnership with Quantum Biopower. More than 27,000 meals have been donated to local soup kitchens since 2016.

- And finally, we had another strong year in athletics, with five conference championships; 10 conference athletes of the year; two conference coaches of the year, 13 All-Americans and nine teams involved in NCAA championship competition (including volleyball for the first time ever).

We should never forget that these are student-athletes, and here they did us proud, finishing the academic year with a combined grade point average of 3.06. Other academic accomplishments included 403 selections to the NE-10 Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll and 14 NE-10 All-Academic Team selections. Well done to Athletic Director Jay Moran and his team, our coaches and all our student-athletes!

ENROLLMENT

Those are the highlights - now for some realities - not all bad! Let's take a look first at our enrollment...

- As of our census day, which is today, we are actually doing a bit better in headcount than we anticipated. Boosted in part by 232 students from the culmination of the 7-year statewide GEARUP program, we exceeded our new freshmen enrollment goal, welcoming over 1,550 new Owls. The GEARUP students - drawn from Waterbury and East Hartford as well as New Haven - meet or exceed our admissions standards and offer great promise to achieve Southern degrees.
- It's interesting to note that the face of Southern is changing. This year, 52 percent of the entering class are students of color. And while we often highlight the number of first-generation college students that we enroll, it's also heartwarming to see the growing number of legacies - students whose parents, even grandparents,

also lived and studied here. The fact that parents are sending their children back to their alma mater speaks volumes about the quality of a Southern education and the welcoming nature of our community.

- This fall, we have also enrolled more than 960 full and part-time transfers, who make up nearly 40% of our new undergraduate student enrollment. To provide improved advisement for prospective and new transfers, we will soon launch a Transfer Student Services office in Wintergreen, with an additional presence on our area community college campuses.
- So in summary, even with our graduate numbers continuing to lag, we will likely finish at just over 10,000 in headcount, when we had anticipated being shy of that mark. That's good news for our budget - more on that in a minute!
- I have to add that we are not alone in these trends - undergraduate enrollment is flat across the system and graduate numbers are down at all of our sister institutions.
- Terricita and her team, working with a range of campus academic and administrative partners, are continuing to develop new initiatives to help us stay competitive in enrollment. For example, we've completed the implementation of the University's first Constituent Relationship Management system - TargetX. It offers personalized, strategically timed automated communications to prospective students.
- We've also automated several financial aid processes for the 2018-19 year. These will help provide new students with earlier

award letters and give timely notification for returning students, supporting retention.

- And we'll soon launch our first annual scheduling venture, which will include published academic road maps to support education planning, and most importantly, a viewable full academic year schedule for 2019-20.
- Of course, you can also help - at a table staffed by our admissions team in the lobby outside the ballroom, you'll find invitations to the graduate and undergraduate open houses on Oct. 4 and 7 respectively. Take them and share them and talk up the value of a Southern education. There'll also be an open house volunteer sign up list...if you can lend your time, please do so. Every additional student makes a difference! Remember that we are ALL enrollment managers—everything we do must be focused on the recruitment, retention, and successful completion of our students.

GRADUATE STUDIES

While our undergraduate enrollment is holding steady, the same cannot be said for graduate studies. Not too long ago, we had one of the largest graduate schools in New England, and were the leaders in graduate education in our system.

Times have changed. Our graduate programs have seen a steady decline of more than 40 percent in the last 10-15 years.

The drop-off is not only in applications, but perhaps more troublingly, in the retention of graduate students that we do enroll - a characteristic that is unusual among graduate schools.

Clearly, serious consideration and action are called for if we are to retain a comprehensive portfolio of graduate degree programs. We must be open to change - we must offer our programming at times and in formats that meet the needs of the working professionals we serve. Too many times I have heard Southern Alums share that they will be attending Albertus Magnus or Sacred Heart because their programs, though more expensive, are more flexible and meet the demands of their lives. Too many of our programs are geared toward the full time student, during a time in which students are unable to pursue graduate education full time.

As I noted earlier, graduate enrollment is struggling system wide, though our situation is more acute. At a council of president's meeting recently, we discussed this issue with system leadership - among the points raised was the need for us to be able to offer quality graduate assistantships that pay tuition and offer stipends. This is an area where we seriously lag behind competing private institutions.

Not all is bleak. As I stated in my recent letter about graduate enrollment, some of our offerings are among the best and retain strong enrollments in areas of high workforce need.

Several programs have reported increases in admissions since last fall, including psychology, women's studies, information & library science and counseling and school psychology. The School of Business has 31 fulltime MBA students for the fall - the largest cohort yet in this specialized program.

With this continued level of commitment, I'm optimistic that we can collectively reach our objectives and restore Southern's leadership role in graduate education.

On that note, I'd like to introduce Dr. Jose Galvan, who has joined us in the role of interim Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies while a nationwide search continues for a permanent appointment.

Dr. Galvan brings many strong professional traits to his new role: among them, proven expertise in enrollment management at the graduate level. His experience and insights will be invaluable as we look to revitalize and grow our graduate offerings.

BUDGET

As you know, enrollment plays a key role in determining our bottom line.

And while our numbers appear to be slightly better than anticipated, we're not yet looking at the revenues and flexibility that we would need to make quantum leaps forward. So cautious, frugal spending and an extension of the hiring freeze will continue for the foreseeable future.

Thankfully, due to efficiencies and prudent fiscal management, we were able to offset anticipated deficits in the last two years without drawing down our reserves. In fact, we ended 2017/18 with a modest surplus. So we enter the year with our reserves intact and we will see what develops. However, this has come at a cost- a large number of vacancies, cuts in resources, and cuts in the hiring of faculty (31-18).

Of course, much will depend on what happens post-election with the

new state leadership in Hartford. I'm not anticipating that there will be any immediate changes in leadership at the BOR or the system office - it's unlikely that the CCSU system will be the first item on a new governor's agenda.

What I would advise everyone, however, is to let matters in Hartford take care of themselves (though you should exercise your right to vote and encourage students to vote) - we have many things at Southern that we need to address and we need our full concentration and commitment right here, on campus.

VISION

With this in mind, I want to take a few minutes to discuss my updated vision for the university.

As we celebrate our 125th anniversary, I think it's essential that we use this occasion as a launching pad, to aim high.

Therefore, my vision is that Southern becomes the Social Justice University of Connecticut, while serving as the regional higher education institution of choice for students and community partners.

That's a lot to accomplish, but I think that we have many of the parts, and most, importantly, the people, in place to get there: not this year, not the next, but in the near future.

As we move forward, we'll adhere to our foundational values, though a commitment to:

- Student learning and academic excellence

- Ensuring that students from all backgrounds can pursue a college degree on a clearly defined, obstacle-free path.
- Developing programs that will give our students the practical and intellectual toolkit for success in Connecticut's new economy.
- Empowering and engaging the off-campus community
- Providing a welcoming and supportive campus environment by embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity.
- And, increasing resources our private support, reducing the number of students unable to complete their education due to a lack of financial resources.

I and my leadership team have identified five key priorities for 2018-19, each of which align with the goals outlined in our university strategic plan. Elements also draw on the academic strategic plan that has been developed by our faculty:

1. Optimize Enrollment
2. Rebuild Graduate & Professional Studies
3. Reorganize and rebuild Institutional Advancement.
4. Raise the University Profile
5. Position Southern as a Social Justice University

You can read more about these priorities and ways in which you can help to advance them on the website noted at the bottom of the vision statement.

But I just want to emphasize - for us to succeed, it has to be a team effort. So I'm asking you to fully participate in this process, sharing

your ideas and concerns with a focus on solutions. Together, let's build on the good things that are already happening at Southern.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The other day I was watching the commentator Fareed Zakaria on CNN where he was talking about the tension on college campuses.

People are walking around on eggshells worried about how what they say or post on social media will be perceived and whether there will be a backlash.

It made me think about how we are preparing our students to be sensitive and courageous and strong enough to face challenges...and it reinforced to me that our social justice mission is both critical and timely.

Another item on your seat is a card describing our commitment to social justice at Southern. Even though it is in print here, I see this as a fluid document. I have had a lot of input already and I'm sure there will be more. It's all good, because I want this to be a starter for the direction we want to go in and the goals and priority activities that we will pursue.

Already, we've been making great strides, and I want to offer my thanks to the members of the President's Commission for Social Justice, as they successfully launched three new initiatives last year: the inaugural Social Justice Grants (a new round of which will be available this fall); the Top Owl Social Justice Awards and the Campus Climate Survey.

Others are underway:

- In an effort to extend our community understanding of social justice, we will engage in a series of conversations across campus throughout the year to help us explore how we live our value commitments; how these commitments appear in our decisions and interactions; how they are reflected in our programs and budgetary decisions.
- Our Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee has been actively assisting our Office of Diversity and Equity in our efforts to build a more diverse campus workforce.
- The Faculty Senate is launching a Task Force to inventory the curriculum for inclusion of content on social justice and human diversity. I am grateful to Dr. David Pettigrew for leading this important endeavor.
- I also wish to express my appreciation to the Office of Faculty Development, led by Dr. Michele Vancour, for their efforts to promote and support a deeper understanding of racial justice, including an engaging Teaching Academy last May. A faculty development grant has led to an informal working group entitled the Racial Justice Pedagogy Project, which is open to all faculty. I'm excited by the ways these initiatives have the potential to impact learning and teaching with our students.
- Now a tradition at Southern, it wouldn't be the fall semester without Social Justice Month. The Call for Programs went out last week and I hope we will have strong participation across campus. I am thrilled to announce the confirmation of David Hogg as a premier event of the month. David is a survivor of the high school shooting in Parkland, Florida last February. In a gap year before starting college next fall, he is spending his time motivating young

people to find their passion and their voices to make a difference in the world around them.

- Additional programs being planned for the month include focus on poverty and food insecurity, understanding the refugee experience, urban trauma, environmental justice, and much more! I encourage you to think about how you can further your understanding and facilitate the learning of our students. Please support the rich set of activities and programs that will take place throughout the month of November.

CLIMATE SURVEY

I want to thank everyone who completed the Campus Climate Survey. With approximately 34% of faculty and staff and 13% of students completing it, a large and rich set of data was gathered for analysis by Dr. Barbara Cook, and two teams of faculty last spring.

Overall, the results are positive and affirming of Southern as a diverse and inclusive campus community. Responses indicate faculty and staff are likely to have a positive perception of our institution and their work environment. Moreover, they are likely to recommend Southern to their friends.

As we would expect, there are members of our community who did not express such positive experiences and there are areas where specific populations have different experiences than their peers. We can definitely do better in terms of our campus climate.

A report of the results will be available in early October. The Campus Climate Survey team will visit many of the leadership groups across campus to share the results. Additionally, there will be an Open Forum as a part of Social Justice Month.

I am excited by the ways we will use this data to create a community that is more inclusive and welcoming, increasing the likelihood that each and every member of our diverse community feels valued and are treated with dignity, respect, kindness, compassion, and civility.

BRANDING

We're almost there, I promise, but I wanted to end on an upbeat note.

You may recall that we hired Simpson Scarborough, a leading higher education marketing research firm, to conduct a comprehensive brand identity research project a couple of years ago. Close to 2,000 people were surveyed. And the information collected was analyzed and reported back to you through on-campus forums and more intimate think groups.

To be fair, I don't think any of us were overwhelmingly surprised by the results. But it did give us a number of key takeaways to build on...

Our students are inspired because of their close faculty relationships... they're connected thanks to our dynamic location and thoughtful on- and off-campus partnerships... they're driven to succeed and take advantage of the opportunities that come from learning at a smaller university... and they're daring, because they're willing to stand up for themselves and do what they believe to be right.

For prospective students in South-Central New England and in the tri-state area, we can and should be a destination of choice.

We have a beautiful campus, enviable new science and learning facilities, unique opportunities for student research, faculty and staff who truly CARE about student success, and we're located in a city filled with culture, intellect, and not least importantly - jobs. As a student in 2018, where else in Connecticut would you honestly want to be?

I asked our communications team to take the Simpson Scarborough findings and develop them into a branding campaign....here's a promo video that shows what they came up with. Thanks to Jessica Carl from our School of Education for providing the voice to that video, by the way.

Just to reiterate... our students expect more out of life. And they come to Southern to get it. And because Southern, in many positive ways, may be more than they expected, they often get more than they bargained for.

Expect more. Be More. Southern.

These are the words that will carve out our identity moving forward, through all our recruitment, marketing and fundraising materials. You can already see them on billboards along the highways, on our banners across campus, and soon, you'll hear them on the radio and tv. In fact, here's a sneak preview of our latest tv ad.

I appreciate your partnership and thoughtful suggestions for expanding this identity to your areas moving forward. There's a web page explaining the campaign in more detail. Please take a coffee mug as your leave today. Select that characteristic that best defines you, as a reminder of your impact on our students.

Thank you, have a great semester and now I'll be happy to take your comments and suggestions for the next 15 minutes...